

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SENT TO D.O.
1-8-04

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Downey Building**
other names/site number **Palm Grill Cafe**

2. Location

street & number **110-112 Southwest Arch Street** _____ Not for publication
city or town **Atlanta** _____ vicinity
state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Logan** code **107** zip code **61723**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William L. Wheeler, SHPO
Signature of certifying official

1-6-04
Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

American Indian Tribe

Downey Building
Name of Property

Logan County, Illinois
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	sites
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	structures
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	objects
<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)
N/A

Downey Building
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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/financial institution
Commerce/Trade/specialty store
Commerce/Trade/professional
Commerce/Trade/restaurant

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Recreation and Culture/museum
Vacant/Not in Use

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Italianate

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation **Brick**

Roof **Asphalt**

Walls **Brick**

other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See Continuation Sheets

Downey Building
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance **1867-1953** Significant Dates **1867, circa 1907, 1912**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Downey, Alexander, Builder**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) **See Continuation Sheet**

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9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository **Atlanta Public Library and Museum**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **less than one acre**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	16	310242	4458820	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheet

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See Continuation Sheet

Downey Building
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title William Michael Thomas, Chairman
organization Atlanta Historical Preservation Council date August 2003
street & number 400 SW 4th Street, Post Office Box 166 telephone 217-648-5077
city or town Atlanta state IL zip code 61723

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Atlanta Public Library and Museum
street & number 100 Race Street, Post Office Box #568 telephone (217) 648-2112
city or town Atlanta state IL zip code 61723

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section 7 Page 1

Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois

DESCRIPTION

General

The Downey Building is a two-story brick building built in 1867 located at 110-112 Southwest Arch Street in Atlanta, Illinois. Atlanta is located in Logan County along historic Route 66. Arch Street was so named for the typical building facades in the business district. The Downey Building still reflects this connection in the arched window detail in the second story.

The building has decorative detailing on its front façade and was designed to house two separate commercial enterprises at the street level. A staircase located through an arched doorway in the center of the first floor façade leads to a joint second story and separates two ground floor spaces. The overall dimensions of the building as it stands today are approximately forty-two feet wide and forty-eight feet deep.

Storefronts

The south storefront entrance is immediately adjacent to the doorway which leads to the upstairs space. This storefront has two large wood window openings. The window farthest south is shorter in height than the adjacent window and has three smaller glass panels running along the top. Prism glass tiles run along the top portion of both windows.

The north storefront has a traditional three part division with the entryway in the center and cast iron columns delineating the doorway from the windows. The transoms above the doorway and wood windows have been covered over, but may be intact.

Originally at the street level, the building had three arches symmetrically placed on either side of the arched doorway leading to the staircase. On either side, the center arch was the doorway into the first floor space and the side arches housed windows. The window muntins divided the window into half vertically and outlined two additional semicircular arches within the window, similar to the neighboring building to the south. Between them, brick columns display protruding capitals at the spring point of the arches. From circa 1907 to the 1930s, the first floor spaces transitioned from the original arched openings to a square/rectangular storefront configuration.

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Downey Building
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Upper Floor

Along the second floor line, brick dentils form the base for a line of seven corbelled arches, five of which contain double hung wood windows. By 1940, the centermost upper window sash had been changed. The other four upper sash window changes post-date 1940. All window changes are more than fifty years old. The center corbelled arch above each storefront does not contain a window, but a blind opening to retain the design symmetry. Brick capitals highlight the columns between the arches. Above the second story, a brick cornice with decorative dentils crowns the building.

Rear of Building

The north side of the rear façade has been altered. A portion was demolished at some point after the mid-to-late 1960s. A wood stud partition wall with a garage door on the first floor was built to enclose the rear portion of the building making it smaller than it originally was. The outline of the original first floor building is still obvious on the neighboring building. A concrete block lean-to addition, measuring twelve feet wide by twenty feet deep, has been added to the south side of the building's rear façade. There is little brick detailing on the rear of the building.

On the rear south side, the door that leads into the rear addition has an arch similar to the front entry to the staircase. One of the windows in the rear is a six-over-six double hung wood window and seems to be the only rear window opening that has not been altered, since the upper floor windows are either enclosed or changed in configuration. No interior doors between the two spaces exist on the ground floor.

Interior of South Storefront

The Exchange Bank of Atlanta, later known as the Atlanta National Bank, originally occupied the south side of the building. Sometime before 1907, during this occupancy, the front façade of this portion of the building was remodeled to its present condition, eliminating the arches in the storefront. As for the interior finishes of the building, plaster and lath were used on the interior partitions and over the brick exterior walls. The woodwork was simple wood trim and hardwood floors. The tin ceiling is still present on the first floor of the building. A fireplace is located near the center of the building beyond the stairs and the brick chimney is visible on the second floor. A large safe occupies the back west corner of the building as a reminder of the building's original occupants. An article appearing in the September 6, 1912 edition of the *Atlanta Argus* reports on "extensive improvements" made to the interior of the building. A new steel ceiling was installed and the walls were "artistically covered." The lower walls were covered with a pebbled paper and with paneling finished in imitation Circassian

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Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois

walnut. The woodwork was all revarnished and a bench (still present today) was placed by the side of the fireplace (*Atlanta Argus*, 9/6/12).

In 1916, this side of the building was sold to Mr. J.R. Patton and then to Mr. J.L. Bevan for use as Bevan's law office. At that time, some interior remodeling was done, most of which can be seen today. On the first floor, a partition was added down the center of the space dividing the front half of the building into two narrow rooms. The back half was partitioned off even with the front of the safe. Upstairs, it appears that an anteroom was added within the space of the front room to gain access between the two south rooms. This small room has beadboard wood construction. The dividing wall has a tall window, a door, and then a smaller door from left to right. Within the room, two large doors opened up into the back room. A small cubicle of wood construction also partitions off the back south corners of the back room. It was obviously a later addition because it runs straight into a radiator located at the back of the building. The 1916 remodeling work is what is currently present in this south side of the building.

Interior of North Storefront

The original occupant of the north side of the building is unknown at this time. In 1887 a millinery store occupied the space, followed by a hardware store. By 1900-1910, the Ellis Dillon Grocery was located in the space and the original arched façade was still intact (*Atlanta Public Library/Museum*, Hayter Photo Collection).

From 1934 to the mid to late 1960s, the Palms Grill occupied the north side of the building. By 1934 the façade had been altered to its present day design. The Grill seems to have used a good portion of the depth of the space, with seating on the north side and a counter on the south side of the narrow interior. A tin ceiling and plumbing to the bathroom on the second floor appear in an available photo of Palms Grill. (*Waynesville Public Library*, Margie Karrick Rich Photo Collection) The kitchen of the restaurant was located towards the rear of the building behind a partition, through which a "pass through" window was used by waitresses to place and pick up orders. The use of the building from the Grill's closing in the mid to late 1960s until 1982 is currently unknown.

In 1982, Mr. John Hawkins purchased it. The front half of the building was used as his residence and the back half for a small engine repair shop. The alterations done by this owner are still present today. The front space while still somewhat open is partitioned into a living space at the front with a bathroom at the center near the staircase wall and a small bedroom with a closet on the right. A drop ceiling has been added. The back portion of the building remains open with a garage door and an exit door.

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Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois

Upper Floor Interior

Access to the second floor is provided through the door between the two commercial spaces which opens into a small landing area before ascending nineteen risers, almost twelve feet. At the top of the stairs, a small hallway runs perpendicular to the stair allowing access into four doorways, two on either side of the stair. Roof access is also located in the hallway through a ceiling hatch on the south side.

Entrance to the front room over the south side is through a doorway with a transom located to the right. This room runs the entire width of the commercial space below and has access to a small closet over the stair. Two large windows allow natural light into this room. Off the hall at the top of the stairs, the second door on the right leads into the back room of the south space. This room is also full width and runs to the back of the building. There is another rear exit at the back of this room, again with an original transom. The brick flue is exposed in this room in the southeast corner and two brick pilasters are located on the south side of the room near the center and at the back. However, the brick in the center pilaster is larger than the brick used in this building or the neighboring buildings so it may have been rebuilt at some time. A radiator is at the back of the building.

The opposite side of the second floor has the same basic configuration as the south side. It has the same entries off of the corridor, middle dividing wall equal with the backside of the hall, and the same brick pilasters. It also has the original door with a transom in the dividing wall, plus remnants of a tin ceiling in the back portion. At some point a bathroom was added along with a foyer off the hallway that also accessed the back room.

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Downey Building
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Downey Building meets National Register of Historic Places Criterion A for Commerce. It is locally significant for its role in the commercial development of Atlanta from 1867, the year it was constructed, to 1953, the fifty-year cutoff for the National Register of Historic Places. The Downey Building was originally designed to accommodate two separate commercial entities and did so throughout the period of significance. The Downey Building was the original location of Atlanta's primary banking facility - the Atlanta National Bank. It was also the location of Palms Grill Cafe, a social gathering place for Atlanta citizens and a stop for people travelling US Route 66. This building reflects the transitional nature of many downtown commercial buildings in its variety of occupants and the design changes to the first floor storefronts to keep in touch with ever-changing business expectations.

History of Atlanta

When Richard Gill, the chief promoter of Atlanta, discovered early in 1853 that the Alton and Sangamon Railway that ran from Alton to Springfield was to be extended northward from Springfield to Bloomington, he bought a large amount of land where Atlanta stands today. Gill realized that placing a town almost midway on a straight line between Chicago and St. Louis, and twenty miles southwest of Bloomington would be ideal as a major transportation and commercial center for central Illinois. Gill immediately had the town surveyed and platted in the spring of 1853. The first sale of lots was held on May 23, 1853 (Adams 2000: 3).

Early merchants and promoters were attracted to Atlanta because of the advantages of the new railroad line with its quick and economical transportation. During 1853 twenty houses, several wooden store buildings, and two grain shipping warehouses were built. By the end of 1855, the population of Atlanta had reached five hundred and there were five dry goods stores, two drug stores, two grocery stores, four grain warehouses, and a hotel. By 1856 Atlanta had become a boom town, with eleven dry goods stores, three clothing stores, one book store, four furniture stores, one hardware store, one seed store, two stove stores, five grocery stores, four grain warehouses, one boot and one shoe store, two millinery shops, two tailor shops, three hotels, two livery stables, two saddle and harness stores, two jewelry stores, one cabinet shop, two wagon and carriage shops, three blacksmith shops, one steam flour mill, one steam planing mill and sash factory, one printing office, two bake shops, and one saloon. All of these commercial buildings were wood frame. The completion in 1874 of the Illinois Midland Railroad from Peoria to Terre Haute, Indiana further impacted the commercial development of the Atlanta by providing a new east-west transportation route to the river markets of Pekin and Peoria.

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Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois**

As originally platted, Atlanta's downtown commercial area consisted of a "square" encompassed on the north by Vine Street, on the south by Race Street, on the East by Arch Street, and on the West by Railroad Street. The original town plat included in this primary commercial district Blocks 26, 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 41, 42, and 43 (Adams 2000: p. 8). Atlanta's commercial area grew and prospered throughout its first decade. Beginning in 1865, however, it was plagued over the course of two years by a series of fires. The blazes resulted in a gradual, but steady transition from a downtown commercial district characterized by wooden buildings, to one consisting entirely of brick buildings.

The first fire of 1865 destroyed all of the wooden buildings on the north side of Vine Street in Block 33. The second fire in 1865 destroyed the buildings on the east side of Arch Street in Block 43, including a wooden one owned by Alexander Downey (Adams 2000: p. 152). The fires of 1865 convinced Atlanta's leading businessmen that they should rebuild the commercial district with brick and mortar. As a result, in 1866 a company starting out with \$2,000 in capital stock was formed to produce bricks in Atlanta. By August 16, 1866, workmen in Atlanta were producing five to six thousand bricks a day (Adams 2000: p. 155).

On April 25, 1867 fire once again broke out in downtown Atlanta, destroying most of the buildings in Block 42. This further reinforced the growing belief among Atlanta merchants that business must be rebuilt of brick. Buildings destroyed on April 25 included a hardware store, shoe store, drug store, millinery shop, and the Masonic Lodge Hall (Adams 2000: p. 156). Less than three months later, a second fire erupted on July 7, 1867, destroying the remaining portion of Block 42. It was after these fires that the buildings that currently form the downtown commercial district of Atlanta, including the Downey Building, were constructed.

History of the Downey Building

The Downey Building sits on the south 48 feet of Lot 3 of Block 43 in the original town of Atlanta. Tax records of 1866 show ownership of the south 48 feet of Lot 3 listed in the name of Alexander Downey, with a value of the property noted as \$100 (Adams, Logan County Tax Records). Downey, originally from Springfield, Ohio, came to Atlanta in 1856 and was very active in community affairs. He was a merchant and carpenter, leader in the local Presbyterian church, one of the original incorporators of the Atlanta Union Agricultural Association Fair, and served as president of the Fair in 1867. Construction of the Downey Building was completed in the summer of 1867. As noted earlier, the building was designed to house two separate commercial enterprises at the street level. Following is an overview of the history of each "side" of the building.

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**Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois**

South Storefront

In January 1866, after being in operation for 10 years, Atlanta's only banking facility at the time, Dill's, Kern & Company, closed its doors, suspended payment to its creditors, and was forced into bankruptcy (Adams 2000: p.154). In March 1866 the Exchange Bank of Atlanta received a charter to do business. It is unknown at this time where the Exchange Bank was originally located from the date of its incorporation in March 1866 until the summer of 1867 when it occupied the south portion of the newly constructed Downey Building.

The Exchange Bank of Atlanta operated in the Downey Building in downtown Atlanta until July 1875 when the First National Bank of Atlanta was established to succeed it. The new entity had paid up capital of \$50,000 and a surplus fund of \$10,000. In October 1875 a new safe weighing 7,500 pounds and costing \$2,000 was installed in the bank. The safe, supplied by Hall's Safe and Lock Co. in Cincinnati, Ohio had "conical drill-proof bolts, tenon, and grooves, and dove-tails, the patent double chromatic attachment, or time lock." (Adams 2000: p. 169). It was manufactured by the Howard Watch Co. The safe was removed from the building when the bank relocated to a building on the corner of Railroad and Vine Streets. The safe was replaced by another one with a heavy steel door with a combination time lock that remains in the Downey building today. In 1879, the name of the bank was changed from the First National Bank of Atlanta to the Atlanta National Bank. The bank continues to conduct business in Atlanta, but is now located at 105 Southwest Church Street.

In 1916 the Atlanta National Bank purchased a building located on the corner of Railroad and Vine Streets from Mr. J. R. Patton and moved its business there. Part of this business transaction included the transfer of ownership of the Downey Building on Arch Street to Mr. Patton. Mr. Patton turned around and immediately sold the building to Mr. John Luther Bevan for use as his, and his son Frank's, law office. After remodeling the building's interior, Bevan and Bevan moved into the Downey Building from their office located on the corner of Vine and Arch Streets upstairs over the People's Bank. John Bevan had practiced law in Atlanta since 1874. He and his son served the legal needs of the community from their office in the south side of the Downey Building until J. L. Bevan's death in 1933. Frank Bevan then continued a private law practice out of the Downey Building until 1939 when he was elected circuit judge of the Eleventh Illinois Judicial District. Judge Bevan used his Downey Building office until his death in 1960 (Bevan letter).

The Bevan family played a prominent role in the history of Atlanta from its inception through the next 150 years. Samuel Bevan, grandfather of Judge Bevan, was instrumental in developing the community along with its acknowledged founder, Richard Gill. Samuel was a school teacher, as well as one of Logan County's justices of the peace. He helped establish the Atlanta Seminary, and was a trustee of the Atlanta Baptist Church.

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Downey Building
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Following the death of Judge Bevan, the south side of the Downey Building remained unused until October 1972 when it was rented as office space to the town newspaper, the *Atlanta Argus*. On January 9, 1973 a fire in the Argus office forced the newspaper to move out, resulting in the south side of the building again being closed until 1981. In 1981 the heirs of the Bevan estate donated the Downey Building to the City of Atlanta for use as an annex to the Atlanta Public Library and Museum. The Museum Annex remains the current occupant.

North Storefront

Less is known about the earliest history of the north side of the Downey Building - at least its first 20 years. Per the 1887 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Atlanta, the north side of the building housed a millinery shop. In the 1892 and 1898 editions of the map, a hardware store is shown occupying the north side. In 1909, Mr. John F. Adams purchased the north side of the Downey Building and began renting it to Mr. Ellis Dillon, who operated a grocery store in the space. It is unknown exactly how long the Dillon Grocery Store was in business at this location, but a closing out sale for the enterprise was advertised in the *Atlanta Argus* in 1926 (*Atlanta Argus*: 7/9/26).

John Adams was the father of Mr. James Robert Adams, who opened Palms Grill in the north side of the Downey Building in August 1934. An *Atlanta Argus* newspaper advertisement of August 4 of that year announced, "The Palms Grill, East Side Square - On U.S. Route 66 - Atlanta, Now Open for Business. Home Cooking, Quick Service, Courteous Treatment. Plate Lunch 25 cents. Regular Dinners and Short Orders Also Served. We Solicit Your Patronage."

Throughout its existence as the Palms Grill, the north side of the Downey Building was a social gathering spot, a source of employment for numerous Atlanta citizens and teenagers, and as a Greyhound Bus Stop - a connection to the wider world. The Grill strove to meet the needs of people seeking a home-cooked meal in Atlanta. It also provided a place for individuals to gather and socialize. The earliest advertisements placed in the *Atlanta Argus* by Palms Grill proclaimed, "We specialize in Club Parties" and "Special Attention Given to Club Parties" (*Atlanta Argus* 8/24/36, *Atlanta Argus* 10/26/34). Good food at the Grill was also combined with a place to dance. From its grand opening in August of 1934 through the early 1940s, the Grill advertised dancing either on a nightly basis or on selected evenings (*Atlanta Argus* 8/24/34, 10/26/34). It even offered a place to play BINGO. In January 1941, the Grill advertised "BINGO - Every Tuesday Night at 8:00" (*Atlanta Argus* 1/24/41).

Palms Grill had a tall neon sign on the front facade above the door that when lit spelled out "Palms Grill CAFE". Entering the front door, there was one square table with four chairs to the right, then a counter top with 4 or 5 stools along the south side of the room. A cash register was located at the front of the counter. Behind the counter was workspace occupied by large coffee urns, a steam table,

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Downey Building
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a cooking grill, and shelves to hold dishes. Immediately to the left when entering the building was a 5-cent slot machine (Billy Johnson, local Atlanta resident Interview, April 2003). Also on the left on the room's north side was a row of four, square tables, each with four chairs. Halfway up the entire north wall, from the front to the back of the space, ran a series of framed glass mirrored panels, approximately four feet square each.

Toward the rear of the space was another counter with four stools that was connected to the counter on the south side of the room. In back of the rear counter was a partition approximately 7-8 feet tall, that separated the kitchen from the seating area of the cafe. A "pass through" window in the partition allowed waitresses to place and pick up orders. Two "Pepsi Cola" chalk boards above the rear counter were used to display menu items and daily specials. There was also a 7Up menu board, a small placard advertising pies, and various other posters on the wall. An octagonal shaped clock sat on top of the back partition. The floor of Palms Grill was covered in flooring (probably linoleum) that featured a square, geometric pattern. The ceiling was made of decorative tin panels.

The rear half of the building, behind the kitchen area, was a dance hall, complete with a piano (Billy Johnson, local Atlanta resident Interview, April 2003). An August 24, 1934 edition of the *Atlanta Argus* ran an advertisement that announced, "The Palms Grill - in the Center of Atlanta on U.S. Route 66. Dancing Every Night. Special Chicken and Steak Dinners. We Specialize in Club Parties" (*Atlanta Argus*, August 1934). A slightly later *Argus* advertisement, dated October 26, 1934, announced, "The Grill, Atlanta, ILL - Try our 35 cent Chicken Dinner Sunday, Plate Lunch 25 cents, Special Attention Given to Club Parties, Dancing Every Wednesday Night, Phone 12."

J. Robert Adams was born February 28, 1888 in Eminence Township just outside of Atlanta. After serving in World War I, he moved to Los Angeles where he worked as a realtor and also "engaged in music and dramatics" (*Atlanta Argus*, March 1, 1951 Obituary). He traveled back and forth between Los Angeles and his hometown. Palms Grill was so named by Robert Adams as a reference to his time spent in California. When the restaurant opened in 1934 it was decorated to resemble an eatery near where Mr. Adams lived in Los Angeles (Billy Johnson, local Atlanta resident Interview, April 2003).

Robert Adams owned the Palms Grill, but due to the fact his primary residence was in California, he made arrangements with Mr. Robert Thompson to act on his behalf in hiring and overseeing the managers charged with running the Grill on a day to day basis. Mr. Thompson owned and operated the Eminence Coal and Grain Company located approximately five miles west of Atlanta. Mr. Adams was a friend of Mr. Thompson, and took the grain he raised on his farm in Eminence Township to Mr. Thompson's elevator. In an interview Robert Thompson's reported that it was not uncommon for his father to hire a manager for the cafe, but for Robert Adams to return to Atlanta from California and

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**Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois**

find some small fault with the person. Mr. Adams would fire the manager and return to California, leaving Mr. Thompson the task of finding a replacement. Each time a manager was fired, Mr. Thompson, upon request from Mr. Adams, would go to Palms Grill to count spoon, forks, and the rest of the inventory to ensure the dismissed manager had not taken anything (Robert Thompson interview, August 9, 2003).

A series of *Atlanta Argus* advertisements between 1934 and 1960 identified the following individuals as the manager(s) of Palms Grill:

- 1934 - Mrs. Maude Miller
- 1937 - Mr. and Mrs. Verald Mooney (Wonda)
- 1939 - Mrs. Florence Sullivan
- 1941 - Mrs. S. P. Grange
- 1941 - Mr. Delmer Causic
- 1949 - Mr. and Mrs. Frank McBrayer (Mae)
- 1960 - Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Hall (Ethel)

Because of its location on Rt. 66, the Grill was frequented by traveling businessmen, tourists, and even several celebrities. Within one week of its opening, the Grill hosted one of the more famous individuals who would stop there, Max Baer, heavyweight boxing champion of the world. On Sunday morning, August 12, 1934, Baer and his entourage, consisting of himself, his manager, and four companions parked in front of the Grill and all but the champion ordered breakfast. Baer remained asleep in his car outside. After the others had eaten they took him a bottle of milk. With some difficulty they awakened Baer and he came into the cafe. Mrs. Tina Shifflet, cook at the Grill, had just taken several pies from the oven. Baer ordered a piece of coconut pie. After eating it with relish, he walked back to the kitchen and tipped each of the employees a dollar, remarking to Mrs. Shifflet, "My gosh, woman, that's the best pie I ever ate." The party then entered their two cars, a Ford and a Dodge, and continued on their journey to St. Louis where Baer was to fill a theatrical engagement (*Atlanta Argus*, 8/10/34).

The Grill was the designated Greyhound bus stop in Atlanta for many years, beginning in January 1940. On the bottom of the large neon sign out front was a small light, that when turned on acted as a signal to Greyhound buses that a passenger wanted to board. In addition to travelers journeying long distances, local Atlanta residents would go to the Grill to use the Greyhound bus service for short, routine shopping trips and other errands. Some Atlanta children even regularly rode it to nearby Lincoln to take baton lessons.

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Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois

In the latter 1940s and throughout the 1950s, the Grill continued to serve as a popular gathering spot. It was a favorite lunch destination for the students of Atlanta High School, who rushed there to get seats over their lunch hour and then again after school. A further reason for teenagers to dash to the Grill was the fact that it was the drop-off point for prom flowers, delivered by florists from the county seat in Lincoln. Many of those same teenagers gained their first work experience waiting tables and grilling short orders at Palms Grill.

After Palms Grill closed in the late 1960s, the north side of the Downey Building remained empty for approximately 20 years. Tax records show that Mr. John Hawkins owned the north side in 1982. Mr. Hawkins remodeled the interior of the building for use as living and working space. He created a small apartment in the front and turned the back portion of the building into a workshop where he repaired small engines. Following Mr. Hawkin's death in 2002, the Hawkin's family donated the building to the Atlanta Public Library and Museum.

Conclusion

While other downtown commercial buildings still exist in Atlanta, entire blocks have been completely altered on the exterior or have extensive interior alterations to the original floor plan on both the lower and upper floors. The Downey Building, however, is an intact example of a locally important commercial building that played a significant role in the history and development of the community of Atlanta during its period of significance from 1867 to 1953.

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National Park Service

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Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois**

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Rich, Marjorie Karrick. Former Palms Grill employee. Interview by William Thomas. 27 July 2003.

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Waynesville Public Library. Marjorie Karrick Rich Photo Collection.

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National Park Service

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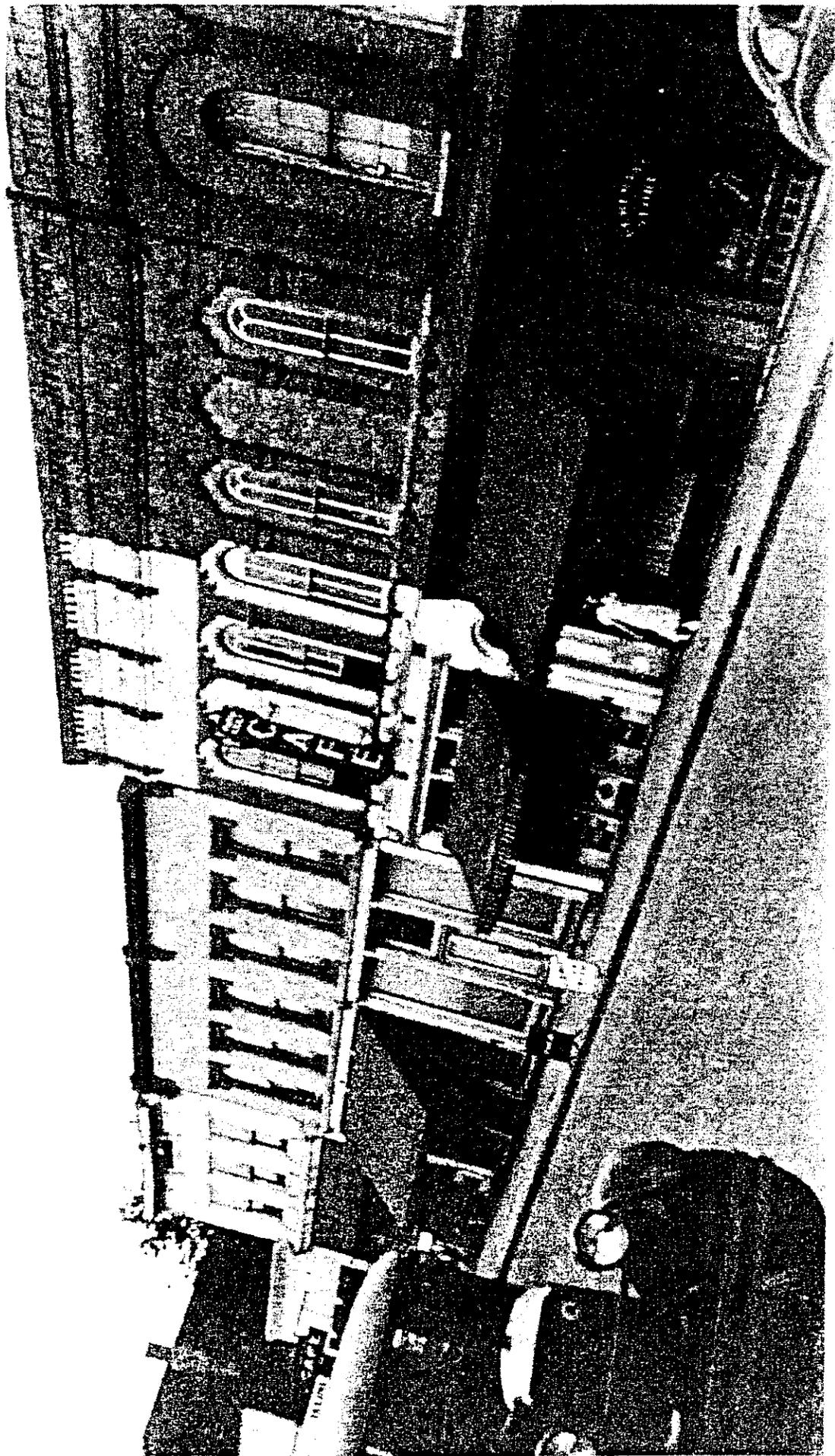
Downey Building
Atlanta, Logan County, Illinois

Verbal Boundary Description

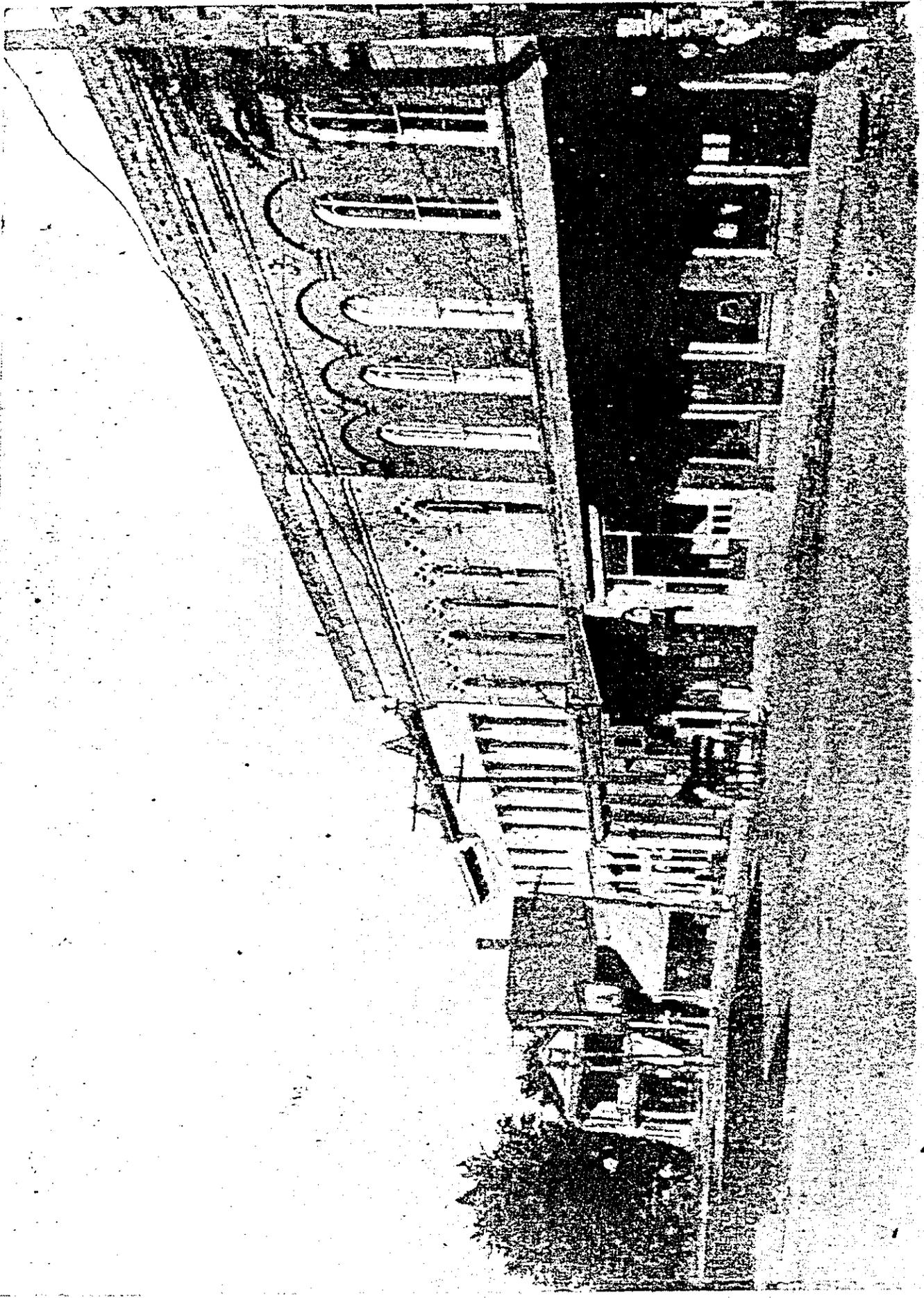
The south forty eight (48) feet of Lot three (3), Block forty three (43) in the original town of Atlanta, situated in the County of Logan and State of Illinois.

Boundary Justification

The nominated property consists of the lot historically associated with the Downey Building located at 110-112 Southwest Arch Street, Atlanta, Illinois.

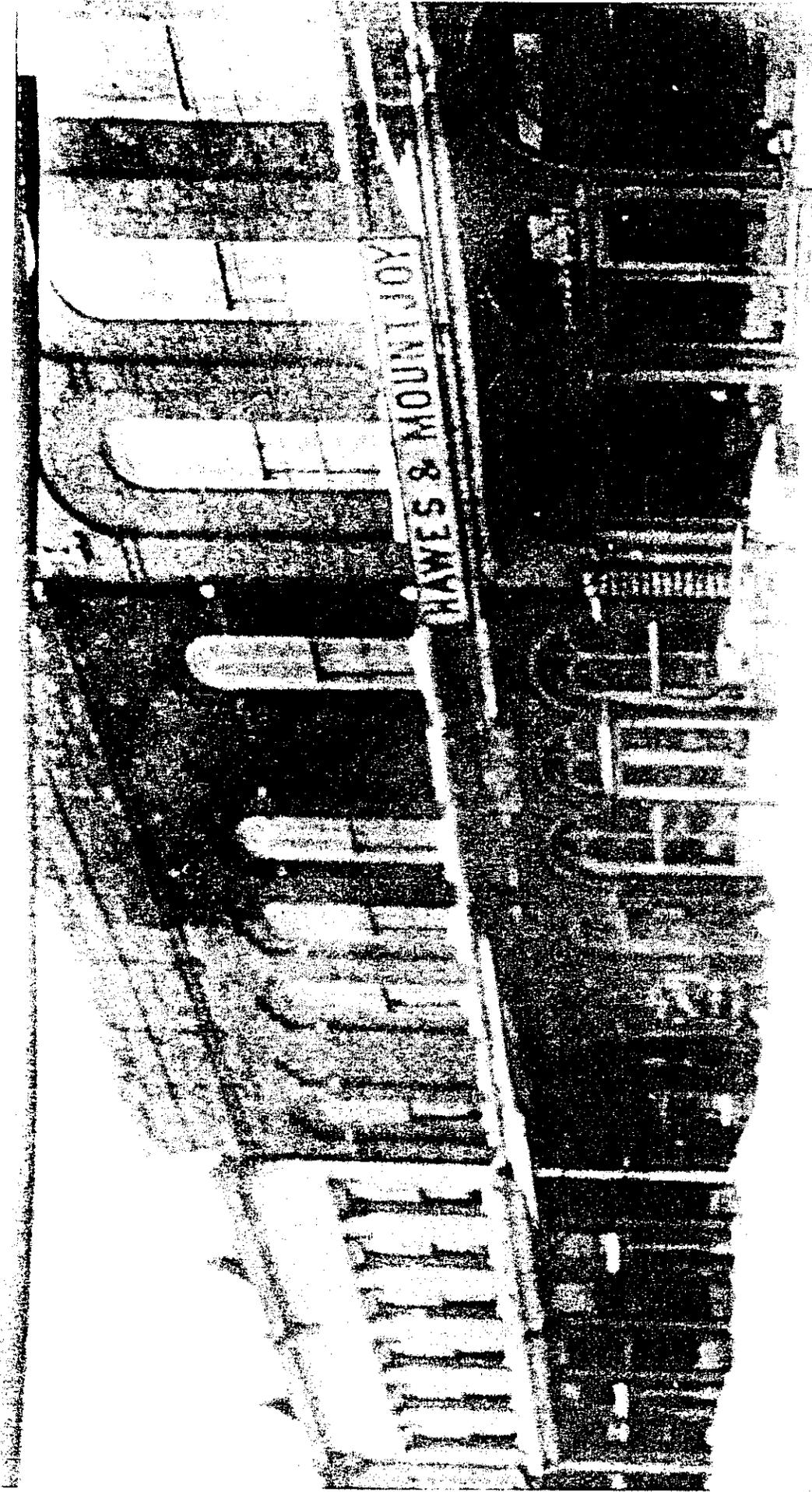


Downey Building - Circa 1940
Logan County
ILLINOIS

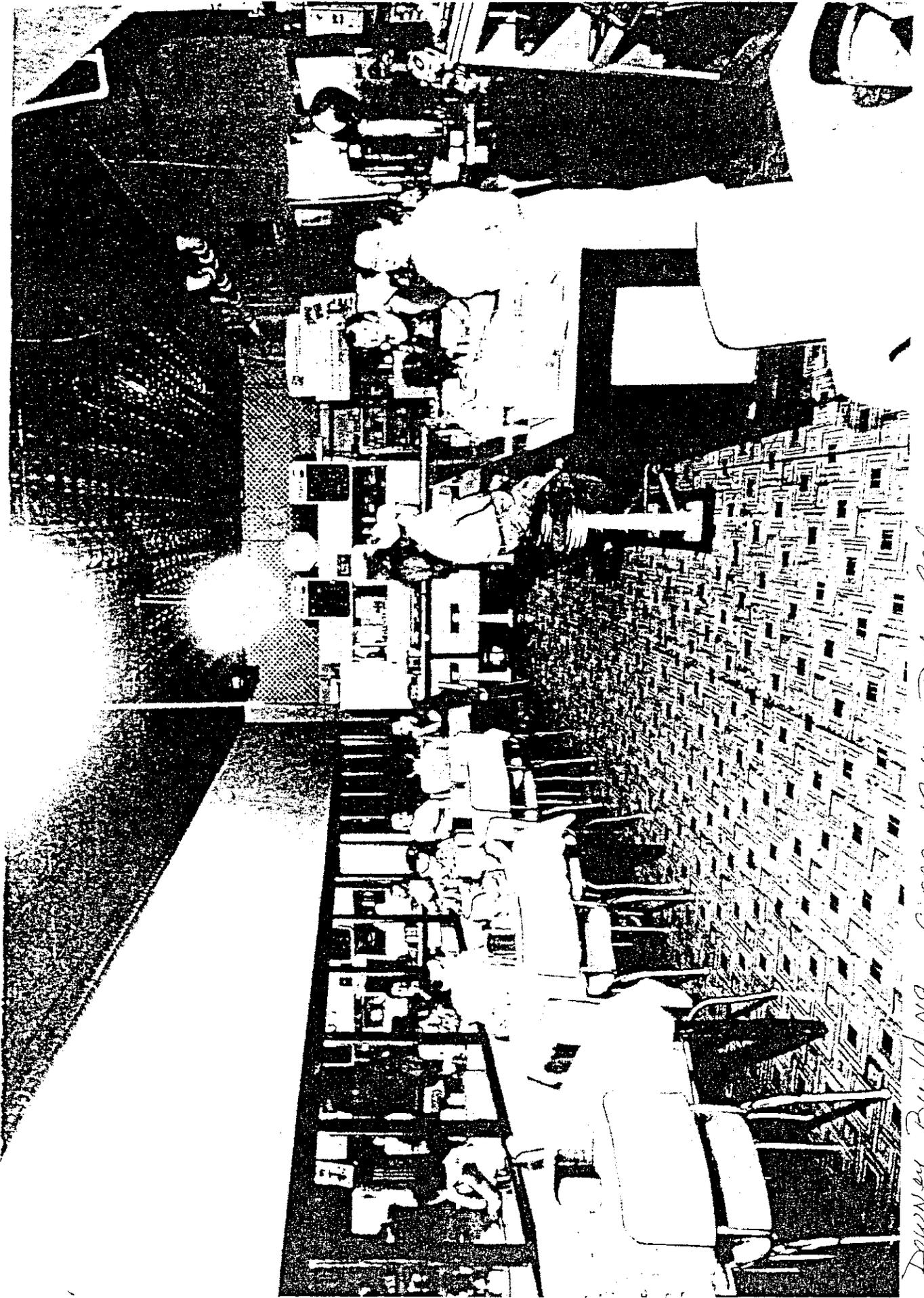


ARCH STREET, ATLANTA, ILLINOIS.

Downey Building, Logan County, Illinois - circa 1900



Downey Building, Logan County, Illinois - circa 1890



Downey Building - Circa 1940 Palm Cafe Interior
LOGAN COUNTY ILLINOIS

States Postal Service is irradiated and subsequently damaged.

WEEKLY LIST OF ACTIONS TAKEN ON PROPERTIES: 2/23/04 THROUGH 2/27/04

KEY: State, County, Property Name, Address/Boundary, City, Vicinity, Reference Number, NHL, Action, Date, Multiple Name

CALIFORNIA, PLACER COUNTY,
Mountain Quarries Bridge,
North Fork of the American River,
Auburn vicinity, 04000014,
LISTED, 2/11/04

COLORADO, PROWERS COUNTY,
Holly SS Ranch Barn,
407 West Vinson,
Holly, 04000068,
LISTED, 2/25/04

ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY,
Kappa Kappa Gamma Sorority House,
1102 S. Lincoln Ave.,
Urbana, 04000074,
LISTED, 2/25/04
(Fraternity and Sorority Houses at the Urbana--Champaign Campus of the University of Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY,
Phi Delta Theta Fraternity House,
309 E. Chalmers St.,
Champaign, 04000070,
LISTED, 2/25/04
(Fraternity and Sorority Houses at the Urbana--Champaign Campus of the University of Illinois MPS)

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,
Maynard, Isaac N., Rowhouses,
119,121,123 W. Delaware Place,
Chicago, 04000077,
LISTED, 2/25/04
(Land Subdivisions with Set-Aside Parks, Chicago, IL MPS)

ILLINOIS, LOGAN COUNTY,
Downey Building,
110-112 Southwest Arch St.,
Atlanta, 04000069,
LISTED, 2/25/04

KANSAS, FRANKLIN COUNTY,
Pleasant Valley School District #2,
2905 Thomas Rd.,
Wellsville vicinity, 04000078,
LISTED, 2/26/04

KANSAS, JOHNSON COUNTY,
Ensor Farm,
18995 W. 183rd St.,
Olathe, 04000079,
LISTED, 2/27/04

LOUISIANA, CONCORDIA PARISH,
Concordia Parish Courthouse,
405 Carter St.,